



The Hans Story



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Chapter 1 by Daniel Mossel

Hans was an ordinary breadwinner with nothing to lose in his mundane life, so he decided to pack up his car and go on a road trip. He had a broken-down rust-bucket and twenty dollars in cash on hand. Just enough for a box of doughnuts to sustain him on his journey to the great motel-o-amusement compound.

As his car putt-putted into the parking lot, he caught a glimpse of the gigantic wooden dog standing behind the motel. Yes, it was only the best of deals; a room to himself and a three-story, climbable dog for his leisure. A man could hardly ask for more, which was a lucky thing because there wasn't any more. No bed, no hot water, no toilet except for a modest bucket tucked in the corner, and and infestation of muskrats in the walls.

Hans let his bag down with a clank and went to work on his next greatest long-term project. It had been 13 years since he had last tried to find out what was inside that dog, and now he was going to use his new invention to break open its dark, canine secrets.

His invention required some assembly. Not too much or Hans would never have remembered how it worked. the hollow drill bit was detachable so it would fit comfortable in its case. This was the most important part of the whole machine and it would allow him to snake a small, lighted camera into the hole without wasting precious seconds taking the bit back out.

That night, the drone of the drill could be heard and as he looked through the wall of the wooden dog's rump with his optic cable, he saw what looked like a spiral staircase and a switch where the wall next to him moved back. Pressing on the outside of the wall, he found the seamless panel which caused it to open, and ascended the stairs not knowing what to expect. At the top of the stairs was a door which, upon trying, Hans discovered was locked. "Damn it," he

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opening downstairs could be heard followed by footstep coming from below him. He smashed the lock's cylinder, opened the door, and leapt forward down the dark wooden corridor until he found himself sliding down a metal tube into the ground.

There's a reason most adults don't play on slides. Once one reaches the double digits they're terrifying. Hans was no exception to this rule and was relieved to find himself with his feet on the floor without having gotten stuck. It was hard for him to tell in the dark, but it looked like he had landed in a storage room. There were geometrically shaped shadows he supposed were tables and boxes.

With the voices behind him drawing nearer, Hans dove behind a refrigerator-sized cabinet and waited. The echo of hurried foot steps filled the underground compound and an older man boomed "Olie olie oxen free!" Hans knew he was done for and this would have been true except that he managed to find a way to open one crate's panel.

Inside, he found something he could hardly believe; a humanoid with a stitched up body stood inside. It had great tusks coming out of its face and the talons of a rather nasty bird sewn to its hands. Hans ducked away before the creature came to life and started to prowl the room. It seemed confused, as if it was trying to wake up from a dream but couldn't. The creature staggered clumsily around the room. Hans could hear its labored breathing as it stumbled by. Just as he had started to believe the creature to be too dim to warrant fear, one of the men entered the room behind him. Immediately, it's posture changed. Shoulders tensed and it's gaze locked onto the man as if to shoot lasers at him. With the arrival of the second man the creature launched into a violent fit and threw himself at the strangers only to discover to its dismay that it was chained to the wall.

Hans had expected to find something incredible, and though he usually wanted to learn more about his discovery, the only thought he could muster was "Why am I here and does that thing eat people?!" Another hallway gave him hope and, with that ticket, he left. Now booking it down the hall, Hans dodged around the tables looking for his way out of that hell, or whatever it was to him. At the end of the wood-laden hallway, he could see boxes full of live rats. He was unfortunate enough to bump into one, knocking it over and allowing its contents to run free. Not expecting the surprise, he fell over and was soon made a floor mat for dozens of scurrying

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Darkness drifted over him and Hans was now far away in a deep sleep. Now when one passes out, there usually is a legitimate reason to why one's entire body might feel sore in the morning. In the off chance that you're like Hans, who has just seen his life flash before his eyes, a bit of you might be wondering "am I done yet? The smell of the rich scent of soil was the first thing that hit him. Hans could feel that he was in a crate filled with straw, which encouraged an eager "let me out of here" along with a headbutt on the side of the crate's wall. Hans shifted his weight backwards and his the upright crate started to wobble. To Hans' own dismay he could have testified that he had only woken up completely as his crate tipped down to the floor with a smash. Light! Hans could see light as he moaned with the pain that one feels when he belly flops out of bed for his for a early 8 o'clock final exam. He wriggled his way through the shattered particle board from the side of the crate to reveal that he was moving face first into a dirt floor. Hundreds of nasty splinters later, Hans brought his face out of the dirt and turn to see a two story window cat lit up an enormous concrete gallery with a blue green hue. painted on the walls. Rain pattered in the background, Hans made eye contact with a macaw which nonchalantly jumped from its branch and dived down into a hilly forested valley. Hans brought himself to his feet and wandered past the blue and wandered down the hall to what seemed like a display along the wall. Hans checked the wall to his right which had a display of what looked like topical indents of constellations of stars or what looked like a constellation of stars or even connect the dots schemas finely chiseled into the concrete wall. The shapes depicted started simple with 3 or more dots and as Hanes progressed wearily passed each exhibit , the shapes formed a number of hexagons along the wall, which connected into one another to form cyclic hexigon structures . The plaques below each figure read explanations such as "They've done it again!" And "splicing: the new cure". Hans ran into an exhibit that particularly interested him.

It had two genomic sequences which were magnified and a few arrows that pointed to and from pairs in the genetic sequences entitled human and feline. As he stared at the diagram, trying desperately to connect the events of the past twenty-four hours, a voice startled him.

"Fascinating, isn't it?" Hans whipped around and was greeted by what appeared to be a knife in a navy blue suit and impossibly tall heels. Noticing his discomfort, she cackled sadisticly and swaggered towards him until he could identify the plant material stuck in her teeth. The macaw

let out a loud squawk and flew over to perch on her shoulder. "Nice touch," he thought. "So!" she said, adjusting her glasses. "You've got a big project, you naughty boy!" Hans just gave an affirmative nod. "Well, you've got a lot to learn about the lethality of curiosity so far. I'm guessing you still want to know what's going on?"

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She guessed wrong. By now Hans was sorely in need of new underwear and wanted nothing but to go home to the comforting embrace of a good stiff drink. However, before he could protest, she grabbed his arm and dragged him through the hall to a door in the back. There, he saw even more stomach turning sights. On one wall, was a collection of embalmed fetuses. At first they seemed to be from ordinary house cats or wild cats, but as his eyes progressed down the row he noticed how they started to look disturbingly human. On the desk in the corner was a stack of papers with one titled "Dissection Notes" on top. "Ssss-s-so you're some sort of - scientist," Hans asked with a nervous cough.

The woman let out a mocking laugh, spooking the macaw and causing it to screech several times while flapping violently. "Ha!" she blasted. "Hell no. Scientists spend the better part of their time sorting through ethical codes and kissing up to their superiors for recognition in the hopes that their work might some day amount to something. I don't give a rat's left bum-cheek for any of that." With that she pulled a gun out of her desk drawer and began turning it over in her hands nonchalantly. "Well don't wet your pants, boy," evidently having noticed the sudden loss of color in Hans' face, "It's only a precaution."

Hans, ignoring her for a moment, glanced around the Lab looking for an exit. When their collective gaze met in a moment, had a concerned expression and explained to him "if you'd like to leave, you could take that glass elevator". She glanced in the other direction and Hans saw what looked like a large green test tube containing what looked like a creature with the top half of a human tethered to a bottom of a mountain lion. Next to it was a empty tube area which looked like an alienesque elevator and by elevator Han thought of those sci fi flicks where beings from another galaxy probed you and sent you on your way as a screaming maniac. Hans pretend he didn't see the service ladder waving through the green embalming fluid of the cat man tube. Hans didn't like choices but in the case of a foreign woman who keeps you in a crate in her living room, he had no intention to participate in whatever she had planned. Hans pretended to inspect the glass "whatever it was" and when Mrs. "Just as a precaution" looked away and then he ran behind the tubes and bolted up the ladder before a few rubber bullets flew in between his legs.

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and he saw the most odd thing turn the corner. It looked like a stood up vacuum cleaner with a hot dog pushcart balanced on top with a television screen on its front depicting several savory hotdog choices. The screen flickered and a text banner scrolled past the display one phrase at a time "you - have - rustled - my - lady's - jimmies ... I don't - like - you -". Hans could feel the frustration working through his veins. He had been pushed around by a stitched up creatures, a mad surgeon and now a vacuum cleaner that was telling him what to do. Hans clenched his fists and the robots screen flashed a " >:-[" face..."Bring-it."

With that, Hans grabbed the nearest blunt instrument, which so happened to be the bust of Richard Nixon sitting on the desk, and launched himself at the robot with all his might. It dodged effortlessly and sent him flying with the force of his own blow into a model skeleton in the corner. As he struggled to free himself from the ribcage, it came after him with a tube that protruded out of the hotdog stand.

"That's quite a big pipe you've got there," Hans said, backing down slowly towards the exit. The clicking noise of heels came closer to Hans and Hans bolted towards an open lobby door as he felt the ground beneath his feet blasted with Lego bricks. They wore down the souls of his shoes as he ran, leaving his pathetically soft feet unprotected.

"He's right, you know," she purred nasally, "my jimmies are quite rustled."

She then removed a syringe from her pocket, needle gleaming. "There's nothing, short of buying bootleg anesthesia, that I find more irritating than unwanted guests!"

Hans' mind was a flurry of information going in all different directions, and the simple command to move his legs was lost in the crowd of other messages in big, bold lettering. "Crazed butcher" flew by, nearly colliding with "This could be you" attached to an image of the mutant from earlier. To add to it all, there was a gif of Satan laughing over an endless field of legos. Unable to break out of his paralysis, all he could do was stand there and drool a little bit.

Hans just stared down the muzzle of a different-looking gun. He walked towards it and a tiny syringe shot out and grazed past him and hit the wall with a high-pitched screech, followed by the shattering of glass behind him. He pushed her esteemed behind down to the ground before she could reload with the theme of Rocky Balboa playing in his head and continued into the

entrance hall. He tried to throw down a barrage of embalmed organs. Not that he thought this would gross her out, but he hoped it would at least slow her down.

It worked better than he hoped. The woman fell like a rubber mallet to the back of the head, causing her to lose consciousness. She fell backwards. Down she went, landing in the noxious puddle of embalming fluid and viscera. Hans removed his jacket,

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fashioned a makeshift rope, and tied her up. She attempted a weak protest as he propped her against the wall. "Baaaaaaaaaaaaaalls," she groaned, "You caaaaaaaaaaaaan't...Make...salaaaaaaaaaad withhhhh a... garden hose..." Her neck went limp. She was out for the count.

The fumes began to get to Hans and he rushed to get out of their range. He barely made it out of the hallway without passing out himself. He ran from the hall to what looked like an auditorium from which he could see a small road with a river parallel to it. The robot was catching up to him and he saw lego bricks as as he charged at the revolving door. Hans pushed on the door but, before he was in the clear, a syringe with some green liquid shot into his back and Hans kept on going until he was across the street and running through the brush towards the stream.

His eyelids were growing heavier, but if he could just get through the water the robot might not be able to follow him or short out trying. His legs rose and fell like lead weights. Indeed, it felt like his entire body was unusually thick and stumpy.

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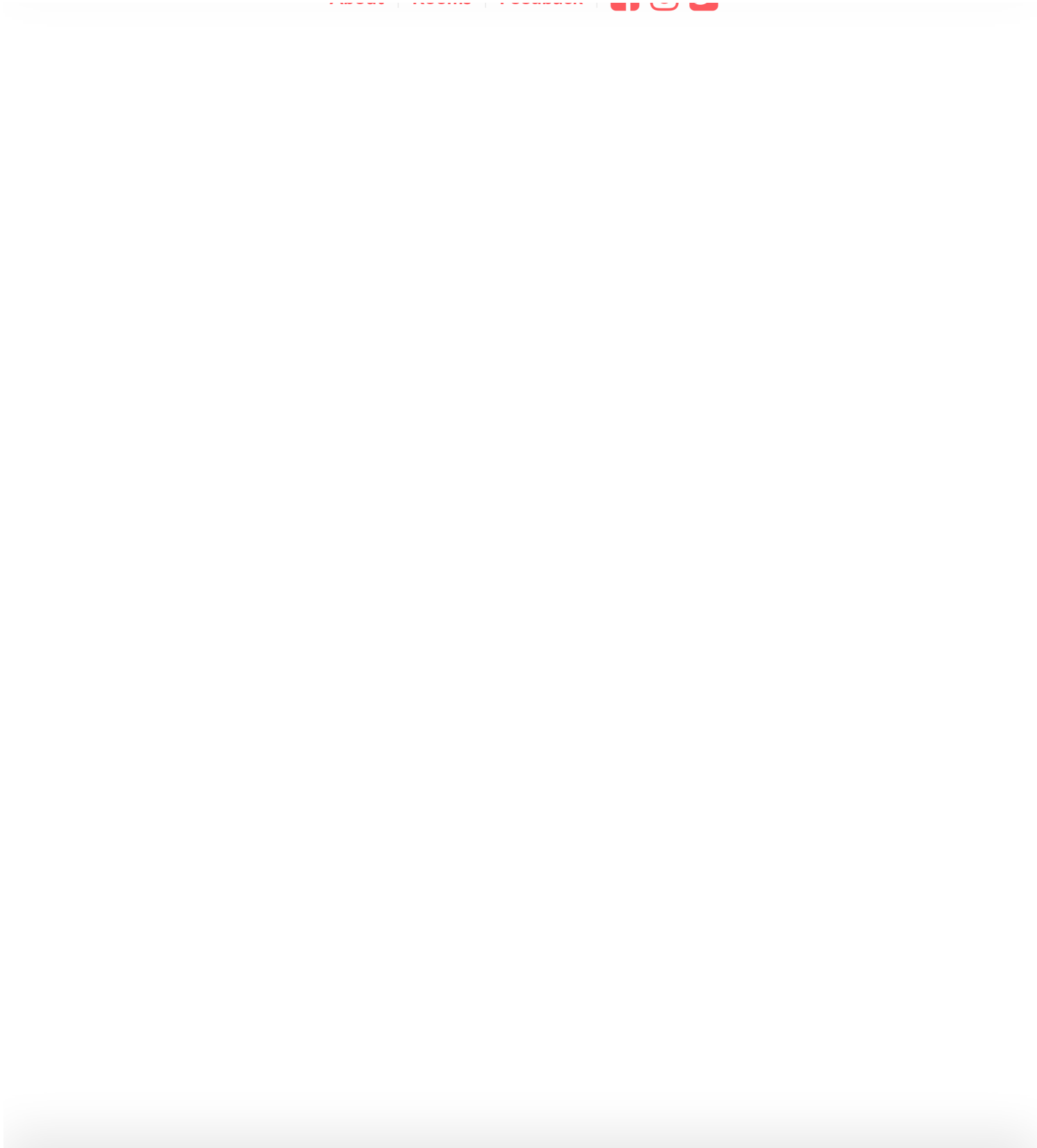
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